

"BEST IF USED BY" GUIDE

The “Best If Used By” date is intended to tell you how long the product will retain best flavor or quality. **The term is not a safety date.** “Best If Used By” dates are intended as useful guidelines. Some foods may deteriorate more quickly and other foods may last longer than the times suggested. A number of factors can shorten the useful life of a food product, such as improper handling and inadequate storage temperatures. The inventory control method of “first-in-first-out” [FIFO] should be practiced by those responsible for managing commodity inventories and distribution at the State and local level. Length of storage period is in relationship to pack date. Suggested temperatures do not preclude contamination by rodents and insects, assuming storage in original unopened containers. Store foods off the floor, and away from walls to allow for circulation of air. Products kept past the “Best If Used By” date are not necessarily “out of condition.” **Food products may be eaten after the “Best If Used By” date if the product has been properly stored, handled, and the primary container is in good condition.**

Recommended Maximum Storage Period In Months

COMMODITIES	Frozen	Refrigerated	Dry Storage	
	0° F or below (-18° C)	40° F (4° C)	70° F (21° C)	90° F (32° C)
BEANS & PEAS				
Beans, cnd	—	72	36	18
Beans, Dried	—	24	12	9
Beans, Refried, cnd	—	72	36	18
Beans, Vegetarian, cnd	—	48	24	12
Lentils, Dried	—	24	12	9
Peas, Black-Eyed, cnd	—	72	36	18
Peas, Black-Eyed, Dried	—	24	12	9
DAIRY (Cheese is located on the last page)				
Milk, Nonfat, Dry	—	24	12	3
FRUIT				
Apple Slices, cnd	—	48	24	12
Apple Slices, Frz	18	—	—	—
Apples, Fresh	—	1 - 4	—	—
Applesauce, cnd	—	48	24	12
Apricots, cnd	—	48	24	12
Apricots, Sliced, Frz	18	—	—	—
Blackberries, Frz	18	—	—	—
Blackberry Puree, Frz	18	—	—	—
Blueberries, Frz	18	—	—	—
Cherries, cnd	—	36	18	9
Cherries, Frz	24	—	—	—
Date Products	—	5	—	—
Date Products, Frz	12	—	—	—
Fig Nuggets	—	24	—	—
Figs, Whole, Dried	—	36 weeks	18 weeks	9 weeks
Fruit Cocktail, cnd	—	48	24	12
Grapefruit, Fresh	—	1	—	—

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	0° F or below (-18° C)	40° F (4° C)	70° F (21° C)	90° F (32° C)
Orange Juice, Concentrate, Frz	24	—	—	—
Orange Juice, Single Serve, Frz	9	—	—	—
Oranges, Fresh	—	1	—	—
Peaches, cnd	—	48	24	12
Peaches, Sliced Freestone, Frz	18	—	—	—
Pears, cnd	—	36	18	9
Pears, Fresh	—	3	—	—
Pineapple, cnd	—	48	24	12
Plum/Prune Puree	—	—	9	—
Plums, cnd	—	36	18	9
Prunes, Pitted, Dried	—	18	9	5
Raisins	—	18	9	5
Raspberry Puree, Frz	18	—	—	—
Strawberries, IQF, Frz	15	—	—	—
Strawberries, Sliced, Sweetened, Frz	15	—	—	—
GRAINS & CEREALS				
Bakery Mix (Regular & Lowfat)	—	12	6	3
Bulgur (Cracked Wheat)	—	—	4	—
Cornmeal	—	24	12	6
Flour	—	24	12	6
Macaroni, Spaghetti, Rotini (Spirals)	—	72	36	18
Oats, Rolled, Quick	—	24	12	6
Rice, Brown	—	6	3	—
Rice, White, Enriched, Parboiled	—	30	20	10
Rice, White, Enriched, Regular	—	48	24	12
Wheat, Rolled, Quick	—	24	12	6
MEATS, POULTRY, FISH				
Beef Roasts, Ready to Cook, Frz	12	—	—	—
Beef, cnd with Natural Juices	—	60	36	18
Beef, Ground, Bulk, Frz	9	—	—	—
Beef, Ground, Patties, Frz	4	—	—	—
Chicken Meat, Cooked, Diced, Frz	6	—	—	—
Chicken Parts, Cooked, Breaded, Frz	4	—	—	—
Chicken, cnd, Boned	—	60	36	18
Chicken, Cut-up, Frz	8	—	—	—
Chicken, Thighs & Drumsticks, Frz	8	—	—	—
Egg Mix, All Purpose	—	12 - 15	—	—
Eggs, Pasteurized, Whole, Frz	12	—	—	—
Ham, Cooked, Frz	6	—	—	—
Pork Sausage, Frz	3	—	—	—
Pork, cnd with Natural Juices	—	60	36	18
Pork, Ground, Frz	9	—	—	—
Salmon Nuggets, Frz	6	—	—	—

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	0° F or below (-18° C)	40° F (4° C)	70° F (21° C)	90° F (32° C)
Salmon, Pink	—	72	36	18
Tuna, Chunk Light, cnd in Water	—	72	36	18
Turkey Breast, Deli-Style, Frz	4	—	—	—
Turkey Roasts, Frz	7	—	—	—
Turkey Sausage, Frz	3	—	—	—
Turkey, Ground, Frz	3	—	—	—
Turkey, Whole, Frz	9	—	—	—
VEGETABLES				
Beans, Green, cnd	—	48	24	12
Beans, Green, Frz	12	—	—	—
Carrots, cnd	—	60	30	15
Carrots, Frz	12	—	—	—
Corn, Kernel, cnd	—	72	36	18
Corn, Kernel, Frz	24	—	—	—
Peas, Green, cnd	—	72	36	18
Peas, Green, Frz	14	—	—	—
Potato Wedges, Frz	12	—	—	—
Potatoes, French Fried & Rounds, Frz	12	—	—	—
Potatoes, Fresh	—	2	—	—
Potatoes, Instant or Sliced, dehy	—	12	6	3
Salsa, Tomato, cnd	—	48	24	12
Spaghetti Sauce, Meatless	—	48	24	12
Sweet Potatoes, cnd	—	48	24	12
Sweet Potatoes, Frz	12	—	—	—
Tomato Paste, cnd	—	36	18	9
Tomato Sauce, cnd	—	48	24	12
Tomatoes, cnd	—	48	24	12
OTHER				
Peanut Butter	—	36	18	9
Peanuts, Roasted	—	60	24	12
Salad Dressing, Reduced Calorie	—	8	5	2
Vegetable Oil	—	24	12	6
Vegetable Shortening	—	48	24	12
Walnuts, Shelled	20	10	—	—

Adapted from USDA Fact Sheets (<http://www.usda.gov/fcs/commodities>) and USDA Food and Nutrition Service